

# Dr. Ambedkar as Member of the Governor-General's Executive Council

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### **PART II**

#### **Part 1**

#### **Speeches**

#### ***Dr. B. R. Ambedkar A Biographical Sketch***

#### **\* Who's Who in Viceroy's Council**

Thirty years ago, a Mahar youth viewed the golden vista of opportunity opened up by education and decided that his life's work should be a crusade against the social system which declared him and his kinsmen untouchables whose very shadows polluted high caste Hindus in their vicinity. Today, Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar holds the portfolio of Labour in the Viceroy's Executive Council, but he still feels that his first duty is to the millions in India who belong to the so-called Depressed Classes and that no considerations of personal well-being or ambition should come in the way of his leading them to emancipation.

Those who know of his attacks on the Hindu social system and of his differences with caste Hindu leaders will certainly feel that he is a much embittered man. But to one who has heard him tell of his career and antecedents, the wonder is that he is not even more bitter and that he has managed to crowd into a life devoted so largely to his crusade against untouchability so many interests, and to study a great variety of subjects with so much distinction.

One naturally asks : How did this untouchable manage to acquire any sort of education ? The answer is simple. His community—the Mahars—are cultivators, village servants and soldiers. They once supplied the Bombay Army of the East India Company with its manpower, just as the Dusads of Bihar and the Pariahs of Madras manned the armies of the Company in those Provinces. Then sepoys were given education in the Army, and Subedar Ramji Maloji Ambedkar, Dr.Ambedkar's father, had once been a teacher in an Army school.

### **Early Education**

Had the recruitment of Mahars to the Army not been stopped in 1892, it is possible that the Subedar's son would have followed the profession of arms as well, but things were to be otherwise. Realising the value of education, the Subedar did his best to educate his sons. This called for great effort. Schools refused to admit the children of a Mahar, and from his native district of Ratnagiri he went to Satara and later to Bombay, where he finally settled. At one stage he had to decide which of his two sons he could afford to keep at school, and he chose the youngest boy, now the leader of the Depressed Classes.

That youth learnt early what it was to be an untouchable. He was born in 1893 at Mhow in the comparatively democratic atmosphere of a military station, but as a child went to the Bombay Presidency. He remembers going to school in Satara carrying piece of gunny cloth to squat on in a corner of the classroom. The school servant would not touch the cloth, which young Ambedkar carried to and fro every day. He could not touch the school tap and could only quench his thirst if the school peon was there to open it for him. At home his sisters did the family washing as no *dhobi* would wash their clothes, and also cut their brothers' hair.

One incident stands out very clearly in his memory. Once he, his elder brother and his little nephew set out to meet their father at some town off the railway line. No cartman would carry them on the last stage of their trip and they had eventually to pay double the fare to drive a cart themselves. The appetising meal prepared for the way was completely spoilt as they had no water to drink and nobody would give them any.

### **Help From Baroda Ruler**

In due course B. R. Ambedkar finished school and joined the Elphinstone College at Bombay. Half way through his university course, his father ran out of funds and a friend took the young undergraduate to the Gaekwar of Baroda who gave him a scholarship which enabled him to secure his degree.

After graduating, B. R. Ambedkar went to thank the Gaekwar, and to his surprise was asked if he would go overseas for further studies.

He jumped at the offer and it was arranged that he should go to the Columbia University of New York. During the months of waiting before sailing for America, the Gaekwar advised Ambedkar to try the profession of his fore-

fathers and made him a Lieutenant in the Baroda State Forces.

At the Columbia University, he studied Economics, Sociology and Political and Moral Philosophy, securing his Master's degree and a Doctorate in Philosophy. In 1917 he went to London and carried on research in the India Office Library and at the London School of Economics, besides joining Gray's Inn.

Returning to India, he offered his services to the man who had helped him and was appointed a probationer in the office of the Accountant-General of Baroda.

### **Experiences In Baroda**

Dr. Ambedkar had been several years abroad and made many friends, Indians, Europeans and Americans, who had not treated him as an untouchable. The feeling that he was One of the downtrodden had thus been erased from his mind. Now it ail returned painfully as he Went to Baroda to start work. Where was he, a Mahar, to stay ? He persuaded a Parsi innkeeper to board and lodge him. Luckily there were no Other lodgers, but after ten days a number Of parsis armed with lathis called on him, asked what he meant by defiling a hostel reserved for their community and told him to quit by that very evening.

He appealed to two friends, one a Hindu and the Other a Christian, for shelter. The first said, " if you come to my home my servants will go." The second friend Wanted to consult his Wife, *arid* Dr. Ambedkar knowing that husband and wife came of orthodox Brahmin stock arid that the latter still suffered from inhibitions regarding Caste, decided to return to Bombay.

There he became Professor of Political Economy in the Sydenham College Of Commerce. But he longed to complete his studies in England. He supplemented his salary by private tuitions, saved every pie he could and after a year or two rejoined the London School of Economies. He obtained the coveted D.Sc. at London for a thesis on " The Problem of the Rupee" and was called to the Bar. His desire to study at a German University took him to Bonn, but the fall in the exchange led him to return to India without a degree.

He had now decided to practise Law rather than serve under Government or in a University, as he would then be completely free to work for the untouchables.

### **Close Association With Depressed Classes**

His early fears that the prejudices of the caste Hindu solicitors and pleaders on whom he would depend for briefs, would bar his progress were not justified and he built up a good civil appellate practice in Bombay. The Universities of Bombay and Nagpur and the Bombay High Court offered him examinerships in law and he was for a time Professor and Principal of the Government Law College in Bombay. Tempting offers of Judicial appointments, with the prospect of a life far removed from political turmoil, he

has turned down.

For ten years the untouchable Barrister and Professor lived in one of the Bombay Development Department's *chawls* at Parel. These chawls are big five-storeyed buildings, each containing about 100 one-room tenements. They possess no modern conveniences, each floor having a single lavatory and a single tap for bathing, washing and cleaning cooking utensils. Most of the tenants are millhands earning on an average Rs. 25 per mensem.

Living under these conditions. Dr. Ambedkar acquired a firsthand knowledge of life among the workers of Bombay. It is his boast that hundreds of mill hands know him personally and have sought his advice and assistance. He has thus gained the confidence of many workers and established his leadership of the Depressed Classes in his campaign against untouchability.

### **Campaign Against Untouchability**

That campaign has been marked by two outstanding events. The first was the Chowdar Tank Satyagraha in Mahad (Kolaba District) when he organised mass demonstrations by members of the Depressed Classes to assert their right to take water from a certain tank. Heads were broken when the untouchables drew water and Dr. Ambedkar was compelled to accept the protection of the police, but the untouchables gained their point. More important still, a great feeling of *esprit de corps* was awakened among them and a sense of their dignity as human beings, which was to carry them further along the road to emancipation.

Encouraged by their success, the untouchables decided to fight for the right to enter the most sacred temple in the sacred city of Nasik.

For over five years they offered satyagraha at the Kalaram Temple. They obstructed pilgrims at the great annual fair to such an extent that the fair could not be held, and they bathed at a *ghat* which, till then, had been closed to them, thereby "polluting" the waters of the sacred Godavari. Many, including a large number of women, went to jail, and although the untouchables were not given the right to enter the Temple, by the time the satyagraha was called off, they had shown that they could unite and had given the caste Hindus a bit of a jolt in no way tempered by their threat to sever their connection with Hinduism once and for all.

### **Political Activities**

As the leader of the untouchables, Dr. Ambedkar has been prominent in politics. He was nominated to the Bombay Legislative Council in 1926, and eleven years later, elected to the Bombay Legislative Assembly as the representative of the Scheduled Castes from the city of Bombay. He fought for his people at the three Round Table Conferences in London and on the Joint Parliamentary Committee which drafted the Bill on which the Government of India Act of 1935 is based.

The most notable incident in his political career was his conflict with Mr.

Gandhi over safeguards under the new Constitution. Dr. Ambedkar claimed certain political safeguards for the Scheduled Castes. As a protest against the provision which the British Government were about to make for safeguards, Mr. Gandhi started a fast to death. The result of the struggle was that Dr. Ambedkar and Mr. Gandhi agreed, under what is known as the Poona Pact, to joint electorates with reservation of seats for untouchables in elections to the Lower Houses of the Provincial Legislatures under the new Constitution.

At the first elections under the new Act, Dr. Ambedkar organised his followers in his own Province of Bombay and, to a lesser extent, in the Central Provinces. In Bombay, his Independent Labour Party secured 11 of the 15 seats reserved for the " Scheduled Castes." In the Ratnagiri District, caste Hindu candidates put up by his Party actually captured two seats *not* reserved for the Depressed Classes. In the Central Provinces, most of the successful Depressed Class candidates were non-Congressmen and followers of Dr. Ambedkar.

### **Stigma Of Untouchability**

Even as a figure of national importance. Dr. Ambedkar does not escape the stigma of untouchability. In 1929, while serving on a committee investigating certain grievances of the untouchables, he visited Khandesh District, and at a place called Chalisgaon was welcomed by the local Mahars. After a long delay at the station he was put into a *tonga* and driven in the direction of the Maharwada, the Mahar quarters. The driver of the *tonga* was lamentably inexpert and at a culvert the horse bolted and Dr. Ambedkar was thrown on to the stone pavement and seriously injured. He then learnt that the untouchables had great difficulty in getting a *tonga* and that, as no *tonga* driver would drive him, one of the Mahars took the reins, not thinking of the risk to his leader.

As recently as 1934 Dr. Ambedkar and some of his fellow workers visited Daulatabad Fort in the Nizam's Dominions while on a sightseeing tour. They reached the Fort covered with dust and unthinkingly took water from a tank to wash. While they were getting permission to go round, an old Mohammedan ran up and raised an outcry, shouting, " The Dheds (untouchables) have polluted the tank." The situation became serious and, exasperated by the attitude of the Mohammedans. Dr. Ambedkar asked : " Is that what your religion teaches ? Would you prevent an untouchable from taking water from this tank if he became a Mohammedan ? " That silenced the crowd, but the untouchables were only allowed to go round the Fort with an armed soldier who saw that they did not "pollute" water anywhere else.

His life's experiences have shown Dr. Ambedkar that, while caste and untouchability are of Hindu creation, India's Mohammedans, Parsis and Christians are not wholly free from Hindu inhibitions on the subject. During his long struggle he has found valuable companionship in a world which denies none of its treasures to the outcast among men—the Common-wealth of

Letters.

### **Literary Activities**

No one who has seen Dr. Ambedkar at home can fail to be struck by the number and variety of the volumes which fill his bookshelves and lie on the tables around him. Books of every kind, but more especially works on constitutional law, politics, economics and sociology, appeal to him.

His own writings include " The Problem of the Rupee ", " Provincial Finance in British India ", " Annihilation of Caste ", " Federation *versus* Freedom " and " Thoughts on Pakistan."

He has conducted Marathi newspapers to awaken the untouchables politically. In 1919 he started the " Muka Nayak " (" Leader of the Dumb "), but this died a natural death soon after he left to resume his studies in Europe. In 1923 he started the "Bahiskrata Bharat" (" Excluded India "), a title which was changed to " Janata " (" The People ") some years ago as he felt that its appeal should not be solely to the communities composing " Excluded India. "

### **Attitude To Religion**

A word should be said about Dr. Ambedkar's attitude to religion. He feels that the Hindu social system, with its four castes and a great mass of outcasts, has been a source of weakness to India as a whole and he does not wish to remain within its fold.

Some years ago the *Jat Pat Todak Mandal*, a reformist Hindu organisation, invited him to preside over their annual conference. Later the conference was cancelled as his draft presidential address, in which he stated that it would be his last speech as a Hindu, was not acceptable to the *Mandal*. He published that undelivered speech as a booklet " Annihilation of Caste. " Its title shows his attitude to caste.

But, while he is determined not to remain a Hindu and has studied the teachings of several other religions, including Buddhism, Sikhism and Christianity, Dr. Ambedkar will not yet announce his entry into another faith. The untouchables, he feels, still need him. His conversion now would have far-reaching repercussions. His faith and the faith of every follower of his is a matter which each man should settle for himself; and he does not wish to influence his followers in this matter. When he has handed over the leadership of the untouchables to others and retired from public life, he will tell the world of his decision. For the present his crusade must go on.

### **Appointment as Labour Member of the Viceroy's Council**

[Dr. B. R. Ambedkar joined as Member of the Viceroy's Council on the 20th July 1942. He was asked to look after the portfolio of Labour. The appointment letter issued by His Majesty's office in this regard reads as under :—Ed.] GEORGE R. 1.

George the Sixth by the grace of God of Great Britain, Ireland and the British Dominions beyond the seas. King Defender of the Faith, Emperor of

India.

To our Trusty and Well Beloved *Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar*, Esquire, Doctor of Science, Barrister-at-Law. GREETING!

We do by this, Our Warrant Our Sign Manual, appoint you, the said Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar to be, during Our pleasure, a Member of the Executive Council of Our Governor-General of India.

(II) And we do hereby appoint that so soon as you shall have entered upon the duties of your office, this our warrant shall have effect.

Given at our Court at St. James', this ninth day of July in the year of our Lord, one thousand nine hundred and forty-two and in the sixth year of our Reign.

By His Majesty's Command

Sd/- L. S. Amery.

*Dr. Ambedkar was already nominated as member of the National Defence Council vide Government Communique, dated 21st July 1941.—Ed.*

### **The Need for Uniformity in Labour Legislation**

*[Here is the full text of speech delivered by the Hon'ble Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, member for Labour, Government of India, at the Joint Labour Conference in New Delhi on Friday, August 7, 1942.]*

" I have great pleasure in welcoming you to this tripartite Labour Conference. I can hardly convey to you adequately the sense of gratitude which I and the Government of India feel for the ready response which you have given to our invitation and the trouble that you have taken to be present here this morning. I hope and trust that this ready response on your part will be followed by an equally willing co-operation in making this conference a success and in carrying through its purposes to fruition.

I do not wish to detain you long; these are days of grave emergency and I realise that everyone must return to his post as soon as he can. I will not, therefore, make any lengthy speech on this occasion but will contain myself with touching upon a few points with a view to bringing home to you the significance of the conference and to state its aims and objects.

#### **TWO SPECIAL FEATURES**

As you know there have been so far three Labour Conferences held in New Delhi under the auspices of the Labour Department of the Government of India. The first one was held on January 22 and 23, 1940, the second on January 27 and 28, 1941, and the third on January 30 and 31, 1942. The present conference is thus the fourth of this series. You will realise the significance of this conference better if I tell you in as few words as I can the special features which mark off this Conference from the previous ones. In the first place, although the previous Conferences met regularly at certain fixed periods, permanency was not a part of the plan of those conferences.

There could have been a break in their regularity and the idea could have been abandoned without doing violence to any rule or convention or understanding. The present conference has permanency as a part of its plan. The organisation that we want to set up will have the permanency and regularity of a standing committee, ready to function when called upon to do so.

More important than this feature of the conference is the second feature to which I want to draw your particular attention. It relates to the composition of the conference. The previous conferences were representative of Governments only—the representatives of the Central Government, Provincial Governments and some of the Indian States' Governments—formed the only constituents of the conference. The most necessary and the most important elements, namely, the Employers and the Employees, were not represented at these conferences. Care was no doubt taken to establish contact and even to consult the organisations representing the Employers and the Employees. For instance, my distinguished colleague the Hon'ble sir, A. Ramaswami Mudaliar, when he was the member in charge of Labour, did take occasion when he visited Calcutta to Meet the representatives of Labour and of employers.

Similarly, my distinguished colleague, the Hon'ble Sir Firoz Khan Noon, to whom we owe the project of the present conference, did in his tenure of office as Labour Member seek occasion to take counsel with the organisations of Employers and Employees. It is for the first time, however, in the history of these Labour conferences that the representatives of the Employers and the Employees have been brought face to face within the ambit of a joint Conference. To my mind this is a feature of the conference which should find a very ready welcome from all concerned and particularly from the representatives of the Employees. Ever since the Witley Commission, in its Report on Labour in India, put forth the proposal that there should be established in India as a permanent body an Industrial Council, the representatives of Labour have agitated for effect being given to that recommendation. For various reasons it did not until now become possible to realise the ideal of an Industrial Council. I do not claim that the proposal which this conference is called upon to give effect to amounts to a complete realisation of that cherished ideal. But there can be no doubt that this Conference seeks to pave the way towards the realisation of that ideal, and I am sure you will not deem it an exaggeration if I say that it marks a long stride on the road which leads to that goal.

### **LABOUR LEGISLATION**

I will now say a word or two with regard to the aims and objects of this Conference. Some of you who are familiar with the proceedings of the previous conferences will know that one of the primary objects which brought those conferences into being was the great desire to avoid the danger arising



out of the diversity in Labour Legislation with which this country was threatened as a consequence of Provincial independence in Labour legislation.

So long as the Government of India was a Unitary Government, uniformity in Labour legislation was not difficult to obtain. But the federal constitution created by the Government of India Act of 1935 by including Labour legislation in the concurrent Legislative List had created a very serious situation. It was feared that if there was no central legislation each Province might make a particular law specially suited to itself, but different from that of its neighbour by allowing Provincial considerations to dominate over considerations of general and national importance.

### **THREE MAIN OBJECTS**

The conferences were called to supply a most necessary corrective to this tendency and to foster among Provincial Governments a regard for the wholesome principle of uniformity in Labour legislation. In constituting this conference I do not propose to abandon this object of uniformity in Labour legislation with which the three previous Conferences were mainly concerned. It will remain one of the object which the Conference will pursue. But to this I would like to add two other objects, namely, the laying down of a procedure for the settlement of industrial disputes and the discussion of all matters of all-India importance as between Labour and Capital. Our Conference will have, therefore, three main aims and objects :—

- (i) the promotion of uniformity in Labour legislation;
- (ii) the laying down of a procedure for the settlement of industrial disputes; and
- (iii) the discussion of all matters of all-India importance as between employers and employees.

In regard to the first it is unnecessary to say why we have included it in our aims and objects. Uniformity in Labour legislation can never cease to be a matter of importance to so large a country like India with its many administrative and provincial jurisdictions. It must therefore, continue to occupy our attention in the future as it has done in the past.

### **INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES**

As to industrial disputes both Labour and Capital have, once in war, behaved with a sense of responsibility and the number of strikes that have taken place has not been on a very extensive or disturbing scale. There was some tendency at the beginning of this year for an increase in industrial unrest, but the laying down of a procedure for adjudication of disputes under the Defence of India Rule 81-A has resulted in some reduction in recent months. That procedure will, we hope, prove an efficient and a reliable machinery, but it is a procedure for the settlement of industrial disputes as one of the aims and objects of the Conference which we propose to set up.

In designing the last item included in our aims and objects we have deliberately used wide language so as not to exclude from the deliberation of the Conference anything that is of importance to labour and capital. But I like to tell you what we have in mind in employing..... this broad expression " matters of all-India importance. " We want to include in it all matters relating to Labour Welfare and the maintenance of Labour morale. So understood, I need hardly say this object, though placed last, may be regarded as the highest in importance. We certainly regard it as most urgent. The urgency I need hardly say is due to the necessities of the war.

### **A WAR OF SUPPLIES**

The present war is a war of supplies and supplies depend upon peace in industry. How to secure peace in industry is a pressing problem for us today. I may not be wrong if I say that peace in industry depends upon two things. In the first place, it depends upon the existence of the machinery ready at hand for the quick settlement of industrial disputes. Secondly, it depends upon the prompt removal of all such conditions in industry which may fray tempers and bring about a deterioration in the morale of people engaged in it. But there remain a large number of questions which are too small to lead to an industrial dispute, but which are big enough to raise temper. Most of those matters which are liable to raise tempers relate to what in ordinary parlance is designated as matters affecting social welfare. For dealing with such problems we have no machinery, and it is mainly the necessity to provide immediately a machinery for advising Government as to how such matters should be peacefully and satisfactorily dealt with that has led Government to institute this Conference forthwith.

### **THE TASK AHEAD**

Such is the significance of this Conference and such are its aims and objects. Now as to the task before this Conference you will perhaps find our agenda to be a very meagre fare. There is no much meat in it. But that is unavoidable. We cannot place before you any agenda other than the one we have placed until we have reached a decision on the preliminary question as to whether we agree upon the plan of having such a conference and what its constitution should be. That being the position, all I can do today is to call upon you to decide upon the following matters :—

(1) The desirability of establishing a Labour conference a permanent organisation to meet at least once a year;

(2) The desirability of instituting a Standing Advisory Committee of this Conference which would meet, whenever Government thought it necessary to invite them to meet and to advise Government on matters placed before it ;  
and

(3) Defining in general terms the procedure for the constitution of these bodies.

As regards the constitution of these bodies, it may be desirable for me to place before you the plan which, we think, is best suited for the purpose of a tripartite conference like this.

### **PLENARY CONFERENCE**

We propose to constitute two bodies :—

(1) a Plenary Conference, and (2) a Standing Advisory Committee. The Plenary Conference will be composed of representatives of the Central Government, of Provinces, of States, of employers and of employees. In general, each Province or large State will be entitled to be represented, and those States not individually represented would be represented by a nominee of the Chamber of Princes. Representation would also be given to the main associations of employers and employees, and it would also be open to Government to nominate representatives of classes of employers or employees who in their opinion were not otherwise adequately represented. It would not in the case of the Plenary Conference be possible to ensure that the representation of employers and employees should be equal to that of Government representatives.

### **STANDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

The constitution of the Standing Advisory Committee would be more rigid, and as you will see from the text of the resolution that will be placed before you that we propose to distribute the representation as follows :—(1) representatives of the Government of India, (2) representatives of Provinces, (3) representatives of States, (4) representatives of employers and (5) representatives of employees, with the Labour member of the Central Government as Chairman.

In suggesting this constitution for the Standing Advisory Committee we have followed as closely as we can the principles underlying the constitution of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office which was set up under the auspices of the League of Nations. There are three principles which to my mind underlie that constitution. First, equality of representation between Government and Non-Government representatives. This is illustrated by the provision contained in article 7, Clause I, whereby out of 32 representatives 16 represent Governments and 16 represent employers and workers. We have given effect to this principle by giving 10 seats to Government and 10 seats to Industry.

The second principle is equality of representation as between employers and employees. This is provided by the same Article whereby the 16 Non-Government seats are divided equally between employers and employees. We recognise this by distributing the 10 seats allotted to Industry equally between employers and employees.

### **THE THIRD PRINCIPLE**

The third principle is an assurance of representation to certain interests by reservation. This will be found in Article 7 which by clause (2) reserves 6 out of 16 Government seats to Non-European States and by clause (4) reserves two seats from the quota of employers' seats to Non-European States. We propose to adopt this principle by allowing one representative from the quota of each, employers and employees, to be nominated by the labour Member of the Central Government. This will ensure some representation of interests other than those represented by the main employers and employees' organisations. I have the justice and fairness of these proposals will appeal to you and that you will not find any difficulty in giving them your approval.

We are setting up these bodies at the centre, but as you know very well Labour is much more concerned with Provincial Government than with the Central Government, and it seems to me that a body set up at the top will require to be supported from the bottom, and therefore if Provincial Government would desire to set up similar bodies in their own provinces to deal with question with which the Central Organisation would deal, I give on behalf of the Central Government an assurance that we should undoubtedly encourage any suggestion on this general point. "

#### **PLENARY LABOUR CONFERENCE AND STANDING COMMITTEE TO BE SET UP**

A resolution setting up a Plenary Labour Conference and a Standing Committee was unanimously adopted at the Tripartite Labour Conference.

The Conference was attended by nearly 50 delegates, representatives of the Central and Provincial Governments, of certain States and of all important organisations of workers, and was opened by the Hon'ble Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.

Representatives of employers and workers were in full agreement with the objects of the Conference.

Mr. V. V. Gin, President of the All-India Trade Union Congress, welcomed the institution of the Conference and hoped that it would busy itself, not merely with discussions but with the question of the advancement of labour conditions and of peace in industry.

Mr. Jamnadas Mehta, President of the Indian Federation of Labour, remarked that the method of the conference should ensure peace and contentment in industry particularly at this critical period.

Sir A. R. Dalal and Mr. Sri Sri Ram, the presidents of the two all-India associations of employers, led their respective delegations. Representatives of the Chamber of Princes, and of Hyderabad, Baroda and Gwalior also took part in the discussions. All the delegates welcomed whole-heartedly the participation of the Indian States.

The Plenary Conference will consist of 44 members with the Labour Member of the Government of India as Chairman. Twenty-two members will

represent various Governments, 11 workers and 11 employers.

Similarly the Standing Committee, consisting of 20 members with the Labour Member as its Chairman, will have equal numbers of representatives of Government on the one hand, and of employers and workers on the other.

The Hon'ble the Labour Member, who also presided at the conference, accepted on behalf of the Government of India the principle that representatives of all organisations of employers and workers should be appointed in agreement with such organisations.

### **Election of a Member to the Advisory Committee for the Utilisation Branch of the Geological Survey of India**

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar** (Labour Member) : Sir, I move:

" That this Assembly do proceed to elect, in such manner as the Honourable the President may direct one representative of the Assembly to serve on the Advisory Committee constituted by the Government of India, to advise on problems connected with the work of the Utilisation Branch of the Geological Survey of India."

**Mr. President** (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Motion moved:

" That this Assembly do proceed to elect, in such manner as the Honourable the President may direct one representative of the Assembly to serve on the Advisory Committee constituted by the Government of India, to advise on problems connected with the work of the Utilisation Branch of the Geological Survey of India."

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar** : It is quite true that my Honourable friend had not the benefit of hearing my maiden speech. I have made many speeches in my life and I do not think I shall be afraid of making a maiden speech.

My Honourable friend pointed out that the reason why I did not speak in support of the Resolution is because there is something very dark which the department is not prepared to disclose to this House. I can assure the Honourable member that I do not think that there is anything behind this project which either myself or the Government of India need be ashamed of. When I put forward this motion, I thought that it would go through in the usual way in which such motions are treated and if I had the slightest inkling that my friend was going to raise these points, I would certainly have posted myself on these questions.

*(An Honourable Member : " You must know the procedure of the House.")*  
Well, I am a new man and I expect from this House a little more charity.

If my friend must have the information which he wants before he can allow this motion to go through, then my suggestion is that this debate may be adjourned to a later date when I shall be in a position to give my Honourable friend the information he wants.

**Mr. President** (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim) : The Honourable Member (Mr. Neogy) can get all the information he wants by putting down a question, but, I suppose it is the desire of the House that this motion should be postponed.

(Voices : " Yes ".)

The motion is postponed.

### **The Situation in India**

**Mr. President** (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim) : The House will now resume discussion of the motion :

" That the situation in India be taken into consideration."

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**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar** (Labour Member) : Sir, the debate on the motion that has been going on for the last two or three days reveals that there are two definite points of view presented by the Members of this House. There is one point of view which holds that the action taken by the Government by arresting the members of the Congress and in suppressing the violent movement that has sprung up was not justified. There is one section of the House which holds that the action taken by the Government is perfectly justified. In a situation like this it might be well for Government to say that it is unnecessary for them to intervene in this debate for the simple reason that one side of the House cancels the other, but it seems to me, from what my Honourable colleague, the Member for Law, has said, that it would not be proper for Government Members and, particularly, the Indian Members of the Executive Council to allow this matter to rest there. Rather than let the burden remain on the shoulders of one section of the House, I think it is very necessary that the Members should take the burden upon themselves, and I, therefore, propose to deal with some of the points that have been made by that section of the House which thinks that the action was not justified.

The points that have been raised evidently fall into two categories; some points are particular in their significance and in their nature; some points are of general importance and although it might be desirable for some of us not only to deal with the particular points but also with the general points, time, I am afraid, is so short that one has to make his selection in meeting some of the charges that have been levelled. I, therefore, propose to offer my remarks only on two charges which have been levelled by the party opposed against the Government.

Sir, the critics of Government have said that the Government were not justified in arresting the members of the Congress and if I understand the argument correctly, the argument seems to be that Congress is a body which believes in non-violence and that if the Congress had been allowed to be free they certainly would have controlled the situation in such a manner that they

would have prevented violence from emerging. It seems to me that the Members who take that line have not correctly read what has happened to the Congress and the members of the Working Committee during the last two years with regard to the principle of non-violence. Sir, as I read the proceedings of the Congress during the last two or three years, the impression that has been left upon my mind is that there has been a terrible landslide in the principle of non-violence as has been proclaimed by the Congress. The non-violence has been deeply buried—I have no hesitation on that point at all.

Let me give the House a few facts. Sir, on the 22nd of December, 1939, the Congress first gave the threat of civil disobedience. On the 19th March, 1940, the Congress had its Annual Session at Ramgarh. At the Annual Session Mr. Gandhi was made the dictator and given sole charge to lead the struggle. Mr. Gandhi became the Commander-in-Chief under that resolution. But on the 22nd of June, 1940, barely within three months, Mr. Gandhi was deposed from his place as a Commander-in-Chief. The Working Committee refused to accept the principle of non-violence as a guiding principle for its action, and Mr. Gandhi had to tender his resignation.

**Dr. P. N. Banerjea** (Calcutta Suburbs : Non-Muhammadan Urban) : That was with regard to the war.

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar** : Please do not disturb me. On the 15th December, 1940, the All-India Congress Committee met in Bombay and there a resolution was passed by which Mr. Gandhi was again made the Commander-in-Chief and requested to carry on the struggle. Mr. Gandhi continued to be the Commander till December 1941. In December 1941, a Working Committee meeting was held in Bardoli and a resolution was passed again deposing Mr. Gandhi.

The important feature of the incident that took place in December 1941 is, I think, not quite well-known to the Members of this House. There was a great schism at Bardoli between Mr. Gandhi and his followers who believed in non-violence out and out, and the other members of the Working Committee who did not believe in non-violence. The matter was put to issue at Wardha at a meeting of the All-India Congress Committee. Everybody in India, certainly the members of the Working Committee, expected that Mr. Gandhi would push the issue to a decision and either have the Working Committee's resolution passed at Bardoli rescinded or, if it was not possible for him to do so, tender his resignation. One of the most astounding things that Mr. Gandhi did at Wardha when the resolution came up for ratification before the All-India Congress Committee was that the apostle of non-violence instructed his followers not to carry the matter to a division. Not only that, he continued to associate himself with the Working Committee and continued to be its Commander-in-Chief. Sir, if that is not evidence that the Congress was saturated with a spirit of violence, right under the very nose of the Congress—

Mr. Gandhi—I do not know what better evidence one could offer on that point.

There is another point which, I think. Honourable Members are not aware of and about which I would like to make some reference. It is not only a fact that almost all members of the Congress Working Committee—at any rate a great many of them—had ceased to have any faith in non-violence, a great many of them had become indifferent to the principle, but there is enough body of evidence to indicate that inside the Congress there was an attempt being made for a planned campaign of violence.

**Sardar Sant Singh :** So far as the war is concerned.....

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar :** Please do not interrupt me.

Sardar Sant Singh : You are making mis-statements.

**Some Honourable Members: It is not correct.** There is no evidence.

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:** I am not making any inaccurate statement. I think there is one piece of evidence to which no reference has so far been made in the House, and I would like to make a reference to it.

An incident occurred at Deoli Detention Camp where Mr. Jai Prakash Narain was kept. The House probably is aware that the Jail Superintendent in charge of the Camp succeeded in getting hold of some papers which Mr. Jai Prakash Narain was surreptitiously trying to pass out of the Jail to his wife. That incident occurred in December 1941 and anyone who wants to understand what was happening within the Congress—within the Working Committees—I submit, ought to pay the greatest attention to that document. What does that document reveal ? That document, if I read it correctly, reveals four or five points. First of all—and I am using the words of Mr. Jai Prakash Narain himself—the Satyagraha which Mr. Gandhi was carrying on was held by a majority of Congressmen as a stupid farce; it had no sense, it had no meaning. Secondly, Mr. Jai Prakash Narain maintained that if the Congress wanted to achieve its goal it had better give up the task of attending to moral victories and should try to achieve political victories. That was again a hit against Mr. Gandhi. The second fact which the document revealed was that there were in existence in India certain parties who were not only not believing in non-violence but were pledged to violence and the parties that are referred to in that document, I find, are these, which are said to be within the Congress: The I Communist Party of India, the Revolutionary Socialist Party in Bengal, the Congress Socialist Party, the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association. It was the project of Mr. Jai Prakash Narain that all these bodies, except perhaps the Communist Party, should be amalgamated into one single organisation which should be a secret party, working within the Congress and working below ground, subterranean—to use the exact technical terminology. Mr. Jai Prakash Narain also suggested that this secret party should not only be within the Congress but should resort to political dacoities for the purpose of getting funds to carry on its own policy. If these two matters to which I have made reference do not convince reasonable



people that the Congress was not to be trusted in the lip service which it rendered to the principle of non-violence, I do not know that there can be any better evidence by which a reasonable man can be convinced. That, Sir, is at any rate one of the circumstances on which Government relied in taking action at the stage it took.

Then I come to the second point which I have selected in offering my remarks in this maiden speech. It has been said by the Members of the Opposition that, although repression may be justifiable by the circumstances of the moment, it should not be the duty of the Government merely to stop with repression but that Government must take some constructive step. When one begins to examine the constructive steps to which reference has been made from different sections of the House, one cannot but be surprised at the bewildering medley of suggestions that have been made. I, therefore, pick upon only one which appears to me something definite and something which you can put your teeth in and examine. The suggestion has been made that the Government of the day should be recast, refashioned, and should work as a national government. Now, in order that I may be able to present to the House the point of view which I am urging with regard to this suggestion, it would be better if I begin by stating what the present Government is, what is its nature. As Honourable Members are aware, section 33 of the Government of India Act says, that the superintendence, direction and control of the civil and military government of India is vested in the Governor General in Council. I am a bit of a constitutional lawyer. I do not claim to be an expert, but I do claim to be a student; and examining this section 33 and comparing it with the constitutions that exist elsewhere and taking as a measure the wishes of the Indian people as to the nature of the government they want, I have no hesitation in saying that this section 33 provides a government which has two characteristics which are of infinite importance. The one characteristic which this government has got is that it excludes autocracy completely. The second characteristic which this government has got is that it imposes collective responsibility. a matter which is so much after the heart of the Indian people.....

**An Honourable Member** : Is it practised ?

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar** : I will come to that. There is ample provision in the Act. The government is vested not in the Governor General, not in a single authority, but it is vested in the Governor General in Council.....

**Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta (Bombay Central Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural)** : Subject to the orders of the Secretary of State.

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar** : I am coming to that; I am dealing with all that. The position is this, that every Member of the Executive Council is a colleague of the Governor General. That fact can never be forgotten and ought never to be forgotten; and my submission, therefore, is that if Indians

are wanting a government which is democratic, which excludes autocracy, and which by law— not by convention only—imposes upon those who are in charge of the administration a collective responsibility, then my submission to the House is this : that you cannot devise a better form of government than the one we have. I know it has been said against this government that although that may be so, this government is subject to the veto of the Viceroy and of the Secretary of State.....

**Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta** : No merely veto-orders.

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar** : I call it veto ; you can call it orders. I would like to use a constitutional phrase as I am a constitutional man.....

**An Honourable Member** : The master's voice from Whitehall.

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar**: What I said is that this government is not a free government ; it is a government that is subject to the veto of the Viceroy, it is also subject to the veto of the Secretary of State. With regard to the veto of the Viceroy I would like to point out that the veto is confined to matters which relate to the safety and tranquillity of India. It is not a general veto. It is not a veto which applies to the day to day administration of the country.....

**Sardar Sant Singh** : May I ask one question.

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar**: You must not ask any question now, I have got a very short time, I am going to admit for the sake of argument that there is a veto. I have read a lot of constitutions, not to be afraid of a veto.....

**Sardar Sant Singh** : I am asking a legal question.

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar** : You can ask me later. I have no time to give a lecture now.

I am perfectly prepared to admit that there is a veto and that the veto exists. My question to Honourable Members who are so much disturbed by the veto is this : what is the significance of the veto ? What does the veto mean ? Let me state it in the most categorical terms, because I find there is a lot of confusion in the minds of many Honourable Members who wish to talk about the constitutional question. What is the difference between an autocratic government and a responsible government ? What is the difference that exists in Germany under Hitler and the Government that exists in Great Britain ? The answer simply is this..... Interruption).

**Mr. President** (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim) : Order, order. Honourable members must not go on interrupting like this.

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar** : The answer is simply this and I want to put it in the most categorical form—the difference between autocracy and responsible government—I repeat it, I emphasise it,—lies in the fact that in autocracy there is no veto, in responsible government there is a veto. That is the simple fact about it. Let all those who want to understand the constitution and who want to frame constitutions bear that fact in mind.

Sir, the only question, the only quarrel that can arise—I can perfectly understand that sort of quarrel—is where should the veto lie ? Should it lie with the Secretary of State, should it lie with the Viceroy, or should it lie at any other place or in some other organisation ? That can be the only point of quarrel. As to the existence of the veto, I submit that there can be no quarrel among those who believe in responsibility, among those who believe in democratic government. The question, therefore, that arises is this : If we are not to have the veto with the Secretary of State, where are we to have it ? It seems to me that if you want to transfer the veto from the Secretary of State, the only place where I can see it can be rightly placed is the Legislature. There is no other place for the veto.

**Sir Syed Raza Ali** (Cities of the United Provinces : Muhammadan Urban) : I am glad that my Honourable friend has at last thought of the Legislature!

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar** : The question, therefore, is this, and I think it is a simple question. Can we transfer the veto to the legislature as it exists today ? (Interruption by Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra). I cannot teach you constitutional law. I am afraid I shall have to open a class. I spent five years in the Law College teaching constitutional law. The question to my mind is this. Can we transfer this veto to the Legislature ? And I must consider the question from the stand-point of the present Legislature because the demand is that the British Government should abdicate at once. The question is, is this Legislature suited as a receptacle in which we can place this veto ?

What is the composition, what is the character of this Legislature ? Now, Sir, it is quite true and I do not think I am saying anything derogatory to this House, that, having regard to the efflux of time, this House is almost in a deceased state.

**Sardar Sant Singh**: It is always.

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar** : It was elected for three years, but it has been sitting for almost nearly nine years. I do not know to what extent the present Members of this House can be said to derive a mandate from their constituencies which can be regarded as direct and fresh, if it has not become stale by the efflux of time. I won't say anything about it, but let us proceed further and examine the composition of the House.

**Mr. President** (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim) : The Honourable Member has already exceeded his time.

**Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra (Presidency Division)**: Non-Muhammadan Rural) : What my Honourable friend says has nothing to do with the motion before the House.

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar** : If you think, Sir, that my time is up.....

**Mr. President** (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim) : The time limit was arrived at by agreement of all Parties and I have got to enforce it.

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: Then I will close my speech. Examine

the Legislature from any point of view you like, examine it from the point of view of the mandate, examine it from the point of view of the composition of the legislature, its representative character, examine it also from the point of view of the electorate which is represented, and I have no doubt about it that this House cannot be regarded as sufficiently representative to impose a veto on a national government.

**Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta** : Why did you call the Session ?

(There were some more interruptions.)

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar**: The point, therefore, is this. Either you must acknowledge the fact that this House is not representative enough to have the veto deposited in it, or you must consider whether during the period of the war it is possible for us to enter upon re-fashioning this legislative Assembly in such a manner that it will contain within itself a sufficient number of Hindus, a sufficient number of Mussalmans, a sufficient number of Depressed Classes, and all the other elements which go to make up the national life of the country. Therefore, my submission is that this demand which has been made for a national government is certainly the result of confused thinking, is the result of the desire of most people, to avoid what I regard as the most crucial question, namely, a communal settlement, because until we get a communal settlement, it is quite impossible to re-fashion this House in a manner in which it would be regarded as fit to receive the veto powers over the Executive that may be fashioned under the new Constitution. Sir, I cannot carry the matter further as my

#### **Election of a Member to the Advisory Committee for the Utilisation Branch of the Geological Survey of India**

**Mr. President** (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim) : Further consideration of the motion moved by the Honourable Dr. Ambedkar on Monday, the 14th September. Dr. Ambedkar had then stated that this motion might stand over so that he might be able to give some information.

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar** (Labour Member) : May I know, Sir, how you propose to deal with the amendments ? Perhaps it would be better if the amendments are moved so that I may deal with the motion and the amendments also.

**Mr. President** (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I think, the Honourable Members who wish to move their amendments may formally move them now. Then, the motion and the amendments will be for discussion before the House.

**Mr. H. A. Sathar H. Essak Sait** (West Coast and Nilgiris: Muhammadan) : Sir I beg to move :

" That in the motion for the words ' one representative ' the words ' four representatives ' be substituted."

**Mr. President** (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim) : Amendment moved:

" That in the motion for the words ' one representative ' the words ' four representatives ' be substituted."

**Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra** (Presidency Division: Non-Muham'madan Rural) : Sir, I beg to move :

" That in the motion for the words ' one representative ' the words ' three representatives ' be substituted."

**Mr. President** (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim) : Amendment moved:

" That in the motion for the words ' one representative ' the words ' three representatives ' be substituted."

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:** Sir, the motion and the amendments raise two questions. Last time when I moved the motion, my Honourable friend, Mr. Neogy, asked for some information to be given to the House with regard to the constitution of the Utilisation Branch of the Geological Survey of India. As the House will remember, on the very next day the Honourable Mr. Neogy had tabled a question with regard to the very same question. In the course of my reply, I gave some information with regard to the Utilisation Branch and I do not know whether my Honourable friend and the rest of the Members of this House desire any more information with regard to this Branch. But I see that there is probably some information which it was not possible for me to give to the house by reason of the fact that it could not be put either as answer to the main question or because of the peculiar nature of the supplementary questions that were asked on that day. I propose to give to the House some information now which I was not able to convey to it the other day.

The first thing that I wish to refer from the point of view of information is the duties of the Utilisation Branch which, I think, I did not mention that day. I should like to inform the House that according to the constitution of the Utilisation Branch, it will have three main duties; firstly, to carry out the necessary field work for proving mineral deposits; secondly to initiate, where necessary, preliminary mining operations ; and, thirdly, conduct experimental work as may be necessary to solve problems in ore dressing and smelting and other problems of production that may be capable of solution by the utilisation of India's minerals. Those are the duties of the Utilisation Branch.

Then, with regard to the programme of work of the Utilisation Branch. I would like to inform the House that at present it falls under six heads:

- (1) re-opening of the lead and zinc mines of Zawar in Udaipur State in Mewar;
- (2) development of Rajputana mica mines ;
- (3) working of sulphur deposits in Baluchistan;
- (4) operations on wolfram in Bengal and the Central Provinces;
- (5) examination of certain deposits in Bihar; and
- (6) search for certain minerals, stones and salts and other related

substances.

The third question on which my Honourable friend, Mr. Neogy, wanted information was the relationship in which the Utilisation Branch stands to the Board of Scientific and Industrial Research. Now, Sir, the position is this. The Board of Scientific and Industrial Research deals with three things, namely, inventions, heavy chemicals and naturally occurring salts. The Utilisation Branch deals with the discovery of minerals and proving them. Obviously, their functions are different. At the same time, there is a certain amount of interrelationship between the Board of Scientific and Industrial Research and the Utilisation Branch, and the inter-relation has been brought about in this way. Dr. Fox, who is in charge of the Geological Survey of India, is the Chairman of the Committee on heavy chemicals which is working under the Board of Scientific and Industrial Research. On the other hand, the Director of Scientific and Industrial Research is a member of the Advisory Committee to the Utilisation Branch of the Geological Survey, and, secondly, by this arrangement, the House will see that exchange between the two Departments has been arranged.

There were two other questions to which my Honourable friend referred. They were by way of criticism of Government's actions. He stated that there was a neglect of India's mineral resources and, secondly, he suggested that the Utilisation Branch was started more for the purpose of providing occupation for evacuees from Burma. Now, Sir, with regard to the first question, I say I regret as much as my Honourable friend does that the question of the development of India's mineral resources was not taken in hand earlier than it was done. But I think my Honourable friend realises that there were three principal difficulties in the way of India's undertaking a project such as the one we have now undertaken, namely, the establishment of the Utilisation Branch. It is to be admitted that up to the present time the Geological Survey of India had not qualified official mining personnel. Unfortunately, the Indian Geological Survey of India followed the functions which the Geological Survey in England had followed, namely, to act merely as an inspectorate of mines rather than as a technical body of experts who were engaged in developing the mineral resources of India. Secondly, there is a certain amount of shyness in the mineral exploitation due to the risks involved in opening up mineral deposits. There was a general belief prevalent in India, probably due to long disuse of mining operations in the country, that India was not well-endowed with minerals other than those which were suitable for export, such as manganese and mica. What I would submit to the House and to my Honourable friend is that while we may regret that we have not tackled the business much earlier than we have done, whether it is not a case where one ought to say that better late than never.

With regard to the question of the employment of Burmese evacuees, I would like to point out to my Honourable friend as well as to the House that in

this matter, we really had no choice. As I told my Honourable friend we have been suffering from lack of official mining personnel. Burma was the only place where mining, such as, for instance, of lead and zinc, was carried on on an extensive scale. Burma is the only place where mining engineers were trained. Consequently rather than saying that we have opened this branch to give employment to Burmese evacuees I think the correct interpretation would be to say that it is because we were able to use the services of the Burmese evacuees that we have been able to undertake this project which I have no doubt is going to be not merely an item in India's war effort, but is going to be one of the greatest things for the future of India.

Sir, turning to the question of the amendments, one thing I would like to say I am really very glad that these amendments have been made. I can now say that the account which I have given of the Utilisation Branch is so convincing that those who came to scoff have remained to pray. But the temple is a very small one and although I welcome the enthusiasm of the worshippers, I cannot allow this small temple to be so overcrowded as to leave no breathing space. I am sorry I cannot accept the amendments.

**Sir Syed Ruza Ali** (Cities of the United Provinces : Muhammadan Urban):  
Would you refuse them entry into the temple even.

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar** : I am sorry I have to oppose these amendments. I will tell the House exactly the reasons which have dictated this policy. I would like to draw the attention of the Honourable Members who have moved these amendments to bear in mind that this Committee is not an Executive Committee. It is not a Committee which can take decisions and, therefore, anything that is done in this Committee is not going to commit this House one way or the other. It is purely an Advisory Committee. The second thing which in my judgement presents a stronger reason than the first arises out of the object of the Committee. The object of the Committee is to bring together experts of the representatives of trade and industry together. That is the primary object of this Committee. I would like to draw the attention of Honourable Members to the composition which has been devised for this particular Committee in order that this principal object may be achieved. Sir, there are altogether 16 members on this Committee as planned for the present. The House will see that what has been done is to put five experts on the Committee and to put five representatives of trade and industry along with them. First of all, there is the Director of Geological Survey, the Director of the Board of Scientific and Industrial Research, one representative of the Mining and Metallurgical Institute, one representative of the Indian Mining Association and representative of the Indian Mining Federation. They constitute a body of experts who will sit on this Committee. Then, as representatives of trade and industry, we have given two seats to the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce. We have given two seats to steel industry and we have the Secretary of the Commerce Department to

represent the Commerce Department on this Committee. From this the House will see that the object of the Committee is really to bring experts who will tell the industrialists and the representatives of the trade what minerals they are in a position to prove and representatives of trade and industry will tell the experts how they could be commercially exploited.

Now Sir, if the House bears in mind that this is the principal object of this Committee, there is really not much scope left for the inclusion of what I might call general opinion in the country.

**Dr. P. N. Banerjea** (Calcutta Suburbs : Non-Muhammadan Urban) : Representatives of the general public.

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar** : Yes, representatives of the general public. The next argument to which I wish to refer is the fact that the Committee is already a large Committee. As planned now, there are 14 Members on it. If I accept the amendment which demands four, then the Committee will consist of 18 and I must take into consideration the fact that if I allow four Members of this House, the Upper House will demand at least three. That means that the Committee will consist of 21 Members which I have no doubt the House will agree will be too unwieldy for doing the business which it will be called upon to undertake.

The next point to which I should like to draw the attention of the House is this : that the constitution of the Committee already provides for the nomination of four Members by the Labour Member and without committing myself to any particular line of using this power of nomination I think it is perfectly possible that one Member of the House may find a place on it through nomination. Therefore, Sir, having regard to the considerations which I have placed before the House, I am sorry to say that I cannot accept these amendments.

### **Why Indian Labour is Determined to Win the War**

*Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's Broadcast from Bombay Station of All India Radio*

" Labour is aware that, if this is a war against, the New Nazi Order, it is not a war for the Old Order. It is a war on both the Old Order and the Nazi Order. Labour is aware that the only compensation for the cost of this war is the establishment of a New Order in which liberty, equality, and fraternity will not be mere slogans but will become Facts of life," said the Hon'ble Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Member for Labour, Government of India, broadcasting recently on " Why Indian Labour is determined to win this War" from the Bombay Station of A.I.R. Here is the full text of Dr. Ambedkar's broadcast;

There is to be a series of broadcasts by persons who are connected with and interested in Labour. My talk tonight, is the first of this series. The subject of my talk is of a general sort. It is to serve as an introduction to the series. The title I have chosen for the subject is ' Why Indian Labour is determined to win this War '. There is one fact which must arrest the attention of all. It



relates to the attitude of Indian Labour towards the War. In the midst of this sudden surge of nonco-operation with and opposition to the war effort which we are witnessing in India, Labour has been actively co-operating in the prosecution of the war. Of this there can be no question. This, Labour has done and is determined to do notwithstanding the many efforts that are being made to dissuade it from doing.

### **What Labour Wants**

During the war Labour has secured many gains and will no doubt secure many more. As pointed out by me recently, Labour has obtained security through legislation. It has obtained the right to safety, care and attention, through the conditions of welfare which have been enforced by the Central Government upon the Employers for the benefit of Labour. But, if Labour is determined to do its utmost to accelerate the war effort, it is not simply because of the lure of these immediate gains. There are other and stronger reasons which are at the base of this determination. Labour is not content with securing merely fair conditions of work. What Labour wants is fair conditions of life. Let me explain what Labour means by fair conditions of life.

### **Liberty, Equality, Fraternity**

Labour wants liberty. There is perhaps nothing new in this. What is new is Labour's conception of liberty. Labour's conception of liberty is not merely the negative conception of absence of restraint. Nor is Labour's conception of liberty confined to the mere recognition of the right of the people to vote. Labour's conception of liberty is very positive. It involves the idea of Government by the people. Government by the people, in the opinion of Labour does not mean Parliamentary Democracy.

Parliamentary Democracy is a form of Government which the function of the people has come to be to vote for their masters and leave them to rule. Such a scheme of Government, in the opinion of Labour, is a travesty of Government by the people. Labour wants Government which is Government by the people in name as well as in fact. Secondly, liberty as conceived by Labour includes the right to equal opportunity and the duty of the State to provide the fullest facilities for growth to every individual according to his needs.

Labour wants equality. By equality Labour means abolition of privileges of every kind in law, in the civil service, in the Army, in taxation, in trade and in industry : in fact the abolition of all processes which lead to inequality.

Labour wants fraternity. By fraternity it means an all-pervading sense of human brotherhood, unifying all classes and all nations, with "peace on earth and goodwill towards man " as its motto.

### **The Nazi New Order**

These are Labour's ideals. They constitute the New Order, the establishment of which alone can save humanity from destruction. How can

this New Order be established if the Allied Nations lose the war ? That is the supreme question which Labour knows it would be fatal to shirk or to avoid. Can this New Order be established by sitting idle and refusing to fight ? Labour believes that Victory for the Allied Nations is the only hope of such a New Order coming into being. If the Allies fail, sure enough there will be a New Order. But the New Order will be no other than the Nazi Order. It will be an Order in which liberty will be found to be suppressed, equality denied, and fraternity expurgated as a pernicious doctrine.

This is by no means the whole of the Nazi New Order. There are parts of the Nazi Order which must compel every Indian to give anxious thought to its dangers, no matter what his religion, his caste and his political faith. The most important part is the one which enunciates the creed of racial gradation. This is the principal dictum in the Nazi Order. The Nazis regard the German Race as the Race of Superman. They are pleased to place the other White Races below the German race. But to the Brown Races—and Indians are included in this category—they give the last place in the gradation. As though this is not humiliating enough, the Nazis have declared that the Brown Races shall be the serfs of the German and the White Races. They are not to have education, they are not to have any liberty—political or economic.

### **" A Direct Menace "**

The fury with which the British Government has been denounced by Hitler in his *Mein Kampf* for having given Indians education and political liberty, is quite well-known. The Nazi ideology is a direct menace to the liberty and freedom of Indians. Given this fact, there is the strongest reason why Indians should come forward to fight Nazism. No one who compares the Nazi Order with the New Order which Labour has in view, can have any doubt that Labour, in making up its determination to fight for the Allies and to defeat and destroy Nazism, has taken up a position which is the only position which all sensible people can take. There are, however, people who refuse to take this view.

There are some who think that they do not mind a Nazi victory and the coming of the New Nazi Order. Fortunately, not many of these are to be found in the country. Those who take this view are not serious themselves. Nobody takes them seriously. They are embittered politicians who will not be satisfied unless they are allowed to dictate their way and whose motto is " all or nothing "

There are pacifists who argue that all wars are wrong. They argue that the troubles of the world are largely due to the wars that have devastated and defaced human civilisation which men have built up at the cost of so much human effort. This is true. But in spite of all this. Labour refuses to accept pacifism as a principle of life. Wars cannot be abolished by merely refusing to fight when attacked. Peace obtained by surrender to the forces of violence is

not peace. It is an act of suicide for which it is difficult to find any justification. It is a sacrifice of all that is noble and necessary for maintaining a worthy human life to the forces of savagery and barbarism.

Surrender is not Labour's way to abolish war. Only two things will, in the opinion of Labour, abolish war. One is to win the war and the other is to establish a just peace. In the view of Labour both are equally important. Labour holds that the origin of war does not lie in man's thirst for blood. The origin of war is to be found in the vile peace that victors often impose upon the vanquished. According to Labour, the duty of the pacifist is not to sulk and to refuse to fight when war is on. Labour believes that the duty of the pacifist is to be active and alert both when the war is on and also when the terms of peace are being forged. The pacifist fails to do the right thing at the right time. The pacifists are active against war when war is on. They are inactive and indifferent when the war is over and peace is being made. In this way pacifists lose both, war as well as peace. If Labour proposes to fight this war, it is because pacifism is not the Labour's way of abolishing war.

### **French Revolution Recalled**

There are pessimists who say that there is no guarantee that victory will be followed by a New Order. There is perhaps room for this pessimism. The New Order, which is the ideal of labour, has its roots in the French Revolution. The French Revolution gave rise to two 'principles—the principle of self-government and the principle of self-determination. The principle of self-government expresses the desire of the people to rule itself rather than be ruled by others whether the rulers be absolute monarchs, dictators, or privileged classes. It is called 'democracy'.

The principle of self-determination expresses the desire of a people united by common ideals and common purposes to decide, without external compulsion ; its political status—whether independence, interdependence, or union with other peoples of the world. This is called nationalism. The hope of humanity was centred on the fructification of these principles. Unfortunately, after a lapse of nearly 140 years, these principles have failed to take root. The old regime has continued either in all its nakedness or by making sham concessions to these two 'principles. Barring a few countries, there was neither self-government "nor self-determination in the world. All this, of course, is true. But this is no argument against the attitude taken by labour—namely, that the preliminary condition for the establishment of the New Order is victory over the forces of Nazism. All that this means is that Labour must be more vigilant and that the war must not stop with victory over Nazis, but there must be no peace unless there is victory over the Old Order wherever it is found.

## **Labour And Nationalism**

More serious opponents of Labour are, of course, the Nationalists. They accuse Labour of taking an attitude which is said to be inconsistent with and injurious to Indian nationalism. Their second objection is that Labour agrees to light for the war without getting any assurances about India's independence. These are questions so often posed and so seriously argued that it is necessary to state what labour thinks of them. As to nationalism. Labour's attitude is quite clear. Labour is not prepared to make a fetish of nationalism. If nationalism means the worship of the ancient past—the discarding of everything that is not local in origin and colour—then Labour cannot accept nationalism as its creed. Labour cannot allow the living faith of the dead to become the dead faith of the living. Labour will not allow the ever expanding spirit of man to be strangled by the hand of the past which has no meaning for the present and no hope for the future ; nor will it allow it to be cramped in a narrow jacket of local particularism. Labour must constantly insist upon renovating the life of the people by being ever ready to borrow in order to repair, transform and recreate the body politic. If nationalism stands in the way of this rebuilding and reshaping of life, then Labour must deny nationalism.

Labour's creed is internationalism. Labour is interested in in nationalism only because the wheels of democracy—such as representative Parliaments, responsible Executive, constitutional conventions, etc.—work better in a community united by national sentiments. Nationalism to Labour is only a means to an end. It is not an end in itself to which Labour can agree to sacrifice what it regards as the most essential principles of life.

## **Independence : A Wrong Approach**

As to independence. Labour fully recognises its importance. But Labour thinks that there is a wrong approach to the question of independence and a misunderstanding about its importance. The independence of a nation *ex hypothesi* does not tie it up to any particular form of government or organisation of society. External independence is quite compatible with internal slavery.

Independence means nothing more than that a nation has liberty to determine its form of government and its social order without dictation from outside. The worth of independence depends upon the kind of government and the kind of society that is built up. There is not much value in independence if the form of government and the order of society are to be those against which the world is fighting today. Labour thinks that more emphasis ought to have been placed *on New India— and less on ' Quit India '*. The appeal of a New India with a New Order is bound to be greater than the appeal of independence. Indeed the vision of a New Order in a New India would very greatly strengthen determination to win freedom. Such an

approach would certainly have stopped the many embarrassing questions which are being asked, namely, freedom for what and freedom for whom.

Secondly, immediate realisation of independence as a condition for support to the war effort, Labour finds it difficult to understand. This condition marks a sudden development in the attitude of some people to the war effort, and could be justified only if there was any sudden conspiracy to rob India of her right to freedom. But there is no evidence of any such conspiracy. Nor can such conspiracy, if there were any, succeed no matter who the conspirators are. In the view of Labour no one can deprive India of her right to freedom if she demands it with the combined strength of united people. If India's independence is in the balance, it is because of disunity among Indians. The enemies of India's independence are Indians and no others.

### **Labour And War**

Labour's attitude to this war is framed after a full realisation of what is involved in the war. Labour is aware that it must win the war as well as peace if war is to be banished from the world. Labour is aware that it is not enough to defeat the Nazis and to destroy the possibilities of the New Nazi Order, it is not a war for the Old Order. It is a war on both the Old Order and the Nazi Order. Labour is aware that the only compensation for the cost of this war is the establishment of a New Order in which liberty, equality, and fraternity, will not be mere slogans but will become facts of life. But the question of all questions is how can the hope of this New Order materialise ? On this question Labour is quite emphatic. Labour insists that for the materialisation of all these ideals there is one condition that is primary—and that is success in the war. Without success in the war there can be no self-government and self-determination for India. Without victory in the war, independence will be idle twaddle. This is the reason why Labour is determined to win this war.

### **Two Features Of Present War**

This war is full of potentialities for good. It promises to give birth to a New Order. Labour finds that this war is different from other wars. There are two features which distinguish it from other wars. In the first place, this war is not altogether a war for the division of the world's territory amongst the most powerful nations of the world as the preceding wars have been. In this war the division of the world's territory is not the only cause. This is a war in which there is a conflict of ideologies relating to the forms and systems of Government under which humanity is to live. In the second place this war is not altogether a mere war as other wars have been. Its object is not merely to defeat the enemy, to march on to his capital and to dictate a peace. This war besides being a war is also a revolution—a revolution which demands a fundamental change in the terms of associated life—a replanning of the society. In this sense it is a people's war, and if it is not, it could and should be made into a people's war.

Given these facts, Labour cannot be indifferent to this war and to its

outcome. Labour is aware how the efforts in the past for the establishment of a New Order have been frustrated time and again. That is because democracy, after it was brought into being, was left in Tory hand. If the people of the world take care to see that this mistake is not committed again in future, Labour believes that by fighting this war and establishing the New Order the world can be made safe for democracy.

### **Correct Leadership**

The country needs a lead and the question is who can give this lead. I venture to say that Labour is capable of giving to the country the lead it needs. Correct leadership apart from other things, requires idealism and free thought. Idealism is possible for the Aristocracy, though free thought is not. Idealism and free thought are both possible for Labour. But neither idealism nor free thought is possible for the middle-class. The middle-class does not possess the liberality of the Aristocracy, which is necessary to welcome and nourish an ideal. It does not possess the hunger for the New Order, which is the hope on which the labouring classes live. Labour, therefore, has a very distinct contribution to make in bringing about a return to the sane and safe ways of the past which Indians had been pursuing to reach their political destiny. Labour's lead to India and Indians is to get into the fight and be united. The fruits of victory will be independence and a New Social Order. For such a victory all must fight. Then the fruits of victory will be the patrimony of all, and there will be none to deny the rights of a united India to share in that patrimony.

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### **The Paper Control Order**

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar** (Labour Member) : I am indeed very glad that the Honourable Mr. Bajoria brought forward this adjournment motion which enables Government to place before the House the facts with regard to the paper situation in this country. Sir, in the speeches that have been delivered in this House, some very harsh things have been said about Government. The Government is accused of being callous, of being selfish, of being hard-hearted, of having no consideration for the educational institutions of this country. I merely propose to place before the House the facts as they are, the reasons which led the Government to issue this order, the steps that the Government has taken in order to ease the situation immediately and for the future.

Sir, I would like to begin by pointing out to the House that there appears to be a certain misunderstanding about the nature of the order which has been issued by the Government. Member after member has risen in this House to suggest that the order passed by the Government in fact means that the Government claims 90 per cent of the paper production for itself. I would like to tell the House that that is a complete misunderstanding. The order passed

by the Controller of Paper is not a requisition order. It is an order which in turn says that the manufacturers of paper shall be bound to hand over to Government 90 per cent of the paper that they produce. The order is what I may call a freezing order, and I want to tell the House that that difference that I am making is a real difference. It is not a difference without distinction, because the order, as it stands, all that it tells the paper-makers is that they shall not sell more than 10 per cent of their production to the public. It does not in turn say that they shall deliver 90 per cent of the paper to Government. That I think is a very fundamental and a very real distinction which the House should bear in mind.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra (Presidency Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural) : What is the difference in effect ?

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:** The Government may release more than 10 per cent.

**Bapur Baijnath Bajoria :** How ?

**Dr. P. N. Banerjea :** When wisdom dawned on Government ? The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : It is the order as it stands. I am not giving the interpretation of the order. I am explaining the terms in the nature of the Order.

(There was an interruption, several Members speaking.) Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim) : Order, order. The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : The second point which I want the House to bear in mind is that the order is served on the paper mills. It is not served on the stockists, who have a large number of stocks of paper already in their godowns. Secondly, it is still possible for the public to satisfy its requirements by getting such paper as is still available in the stocks which have been stored and hoarded by stockists before the order was passed. The third thing which I wish to remind the House about this order is this : that it is possible under the order, as it is framed, for the Controller of Paper to permit the mills to sell more than 10 per cent. There is no bar, there is no impediment, no obstacle placed if the Controller of Paper, notwithstanding the order that has been passed on the 5th November, finds that it is possible for him to release for public consumption more than 10 per cent of the paper. It is still open to him to do so. Having explained to the House what is actually involved in the order issued by the Government, I would like to take the House and acquaint it with the immediate circumstances which compelled Government to pass this order.

Briefly, the facts are these. In the First six months, viz., from April to September, our demand for paper, which is put forth by the Central Stationery Office, amounted to 34,000 tons. It was found that the mills had already delivered about 16,000 tons of paper to Government on behalf of the Central Stationery Office. The House will bear in mind that we had entered into a contract with the paper mills for supplying us 25,900 tons. If the House will

enter into a little arithmetic, it will be found that as a result of our calculations for the first six months it was found that we had only 9,000 tons to get under our contract from the paper mills and had to run six months yet. Consequently, what the Government did was this. The Government revised its estimate in the light of the circumstances that had been disclosed during the previous six months. The second thing that the Government did was to consolidate the method of requisitioning paper, and here I would like to tell the House that before the order was passed there were two methods by which demands for paper on behalf of Government were put forth. One way was the Central Stationery Office demand, which was a demand on behalf of the Central Government, and the provinces of Bengal, Orissa, Assam, and the North-West Frontier Province and the Central Provinces. The other was the non-Central Stationery office demand, made on behalf of what are technically called the Non-C.S.O. provinces, i.e. the provinces who presented their demands independently of the Central Stationery Office, plus Indian States, Security Printing, Supply Department, and non-State Railways. It was found that these two independent methods of requisitioning paper for Government created a great deal of difficulty in arriving at an accurate estimate of the total demand for paper, and consequently the first step that was taken was to consolidate these two channels of demand into one single channel, and the whole matter is now concentrated in the hands of the Central Stationery Office.

As I told the House previously, when the situation was found to have grown somewhat perilous on account of the excessive use of paper, and practically overdrawn over the contract amount, we revised the estimates and centralised the demands, and the position at the end of October worked out to these figures :

	Tons
The Central Stationery Office demand for the next six months, i.e. from October to March 1943 was fixed at	...
32,000	...
The Non-Central Stationery Office demand was fixed at	...
9,500	...
Together the total came to	...
41,500	

On the basis of the production of the mills during that year, it was calculated that the mills would produce 47,575 tons during October and March. It will be found that the Government demand of 41,500 tons represented 87 per cent of the mills production during the six months. Roughly it was 90 per cent, and that is the reason why the order maintained 90 per cent as the figure. Now, the House will understand why it became necessary in November to issue this order. I want to tell the House the measures that the Government has



taken in order to increase production of paper.

Of course, as the House will realise, it is not possible for Government to help the paper mills in the importation of additional machinery in order to enable them to increase their production. The difficulty of shipping is quite well known and it is quite beyond the powers of the Government to do anything in the matter. Consequently we have to work out whatever we can to increase the production of paper within the means which are available to us; and I would like to draw the attention of the House to three things which the Government has done and which could be usefully referred to as measures taken to increase production. The Government has appointed a paper production officer, whose duty it is to find out ways and means by which production of paper could be increased.....

**An Honourable Member** : Who is this gentleman ?

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar** : Mr. Bhargava. Secondly, the Government has cut out non-essential luxury varieties of paper and has restricted Government requirements to only a few easily manufactured standard qualities. Thirdly, the Government has been dealing with each mill separately to find out what sort of paper each particular mill, having regard to its machinery and its equipment, can produce to the largest extent. It is estimated at present that as a result of the measures taken to increase production, the increase would be about 12,000 tons.

The next thing that the Government has done in order to ease the situation is to impose cuts, arbitrary cuts, on the demands of the various departments made for paper. These cuts are as follows : provincial and state requirements have been cut down arbitrarily by 10 per cent, which gives a saving of 950 tons. Secondly, so far as the Central Government is concerned, the budgets for paper presented by the various departments which spend paper—their original estimates have been revised and cut down to an appreciable extent. To illustrate what the Government has done in the matter of revising these estimates, I would place before the House the following figures. The original estimate of the civil departments was 11,400 tons and it has been cut down to 4,600 tons during the six months. The original estimate of the Defence Department was 15,000 tons and it has been cut down to 10,000 tons. The Eastern Group Supply Council's original estimate was 9,400 tons and that has been cut down to 7,900 tons. The Supply Department's requirement of 3,100 tons has been increased to 4,500 tons—that is commercial paper used for industry. As the House will notice, the original estimates of the departments to which I have referred came to 39,100 tons, while the revised estimates come to 27,600 tons. The House will be pleased to notice that, as I have already indicated, by the cut imposed on the provincial and Indian State requirements a saving has been effected of 950 tons. And to that 11,900 tons obtained by revising the estimates of the different departments and the total comes to 12,850 tons. Now, compare this in the light of the paper that is consumed in

India. There are no exact figures nor is it possible to obtain any exact figures; but such figures as Government have shown that the annual consumption of paper in India was about one lakh of tons : for six months it comes to 50,000 tons and as the House will remember, ten per cent of that is already left to the public under the orders issued by the Controller of Printing. That gives the public 5,000 tons. Add to that the 12,850 tons which have been saved now or will be saved by the reduction I have referred to, the total paper which can be released is 17,850 tons which as the House will see comes to nearly 33 per cent of what the public consume during peace time.....

**Mr. President** (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member's time is up; there is no option.

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar** : I was going to refer next to the measures that we have taken in order to avoid waste. As my time is up I do not wish to go into those details. I can send them to the press, if that is the view of the House.

The next thing that I would refer the Honourable House to is what we propose to *do* for the next year. For the next year the estimate is about 70,000 tons ; in that what we have done is this ; we have fixed the quota of every department which needs paper. For instance, the Controller of Broadcasting is told he will not get more than 260 tons ; the Counter-Propaganda Directorate will have only 100 tons ; National War-Front 350 tons and Public Information 300 tons. There is a lot of other matter which, if I had time, I might have presented to the House. All that I want to say to the House is that it is not fair to suggest that the Government is callous. I do not deny that there is probably still enough room for economy, and I am very much obliged to the members who have made various suggestions as to how economy could be effected, and I will certainly convey those suggestions to the proper quarters, so that action may be taken. I hope that the Honourable Members will be satisfied that the Government is taking such steps as it can in the matter.

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### **Announcement re Grant of Inadequate Dearness Allowance to Workers**

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar** (Labour Member) : Sir, the motion made by Mr. Mehta raises two points, if I understand it correctly. One point is that the Government failed to consult the representatives of Trade Unions when they last raised the dearness allowance. The second point which is raised in the motion is that the dearness allowances which were announced on the 21st of January last were meagre and inadequate. Sir, I am sorry to say that although I have every sympathy with Mr. Mehta for bringing forward this motion, I am bound to say that the motion has been based upon misunderstanding.

Sir, I will take the first question, namely, that the dearness allowances announced by the Government of India are meagre and inadequate. Sir, with regard to the meagreness of the allowances the point that I would like the House to bear in mind is this, that there is no final decision at which Government have arrived, it cannot be said that the figures that they have announced by the notification of the 23rd February are not to be altered or are not to be increased.

**Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra** (Presidency Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural) : Is it tentative ?

The Honourable **Dr. B. R. Ambedkar** : It may be. There is the case that those figures do not grant adequate dearness allowance. But as I said there is no finality about it. The situation is still fluid and it is a matter for consideration now for the Government as to the form which the dearness allowance should take, whether the dearness allowance should take the form of cash allowance or whether the dearness allowance should take the form of food provision, that is a matter which the Government has to decide before the Government can fix upon any particular pitch at which dearness allowance should be fixed. Therefore my submission on that point is that it cannot be said that Government has taken any decision which can be said to be irretrievable, irrevocable, unamendable.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: Is there a good conduct allowance ?

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar** : I think it is in the Postal Department that the concession has been given. With regard to meagreness and the inadequacy, the matter as I say, is still open and it may be considered at the proper time.

Coming to the second accusation, namely, that the Government did not consult the representatives of trade unions, I think it is necessary to bear in mind that in the first place there are some difficulties in the matter of establishing contract with labour. The difficulty is this. As my Honourable friend, Mr. Jamnadas Mehta, knows, so far as the railways are concerned, there are Unions, which Unions have been federated into a single organisation and it makes matters quite easy for the Government to establish contact with workers on the Railways to obtain their opinion and to consult them whenever occasion for consultation arises. That, I think, Mr. Jamnadas Mehta will admit that the Government have been doing. In fact the convention has already been established and has been practised without any departure that the Railway Board and the Railwaymen's Federation meet twice a year to discuss matters of common concern.

Then, Sir, under the Central Government there are employees of the Posts and Telegraph Department. As I understand, there are twelve Unions which represent the posts and telegraph workers of the Central Government. Out of them four are Unions representing the higher officers and eight represent the union of workers. Unfortunately there is no single body, no Federation of the

different workers of the Posts and Telegraph Department and consequently it has not been possible to establish the same sort of contact which it is possible for the Railway Board to establish with the Railwaymen's Federation. But I do like to point out the fact that notwithstanding this difficulty the Government had as a matter of fact contact with the posts and telegraph workers before taking action. I should like to read to the House a short paragraph from a magazine called the Telegraph Review for January, 1943, which records the attempts made by the Posts and Telegraph Department to establish contact with the workers in the Posts and Telegraph. This is what the Review says :

" During his recent visit to Calcutta, the Director General invited the representatives of the different recognised service Unions and held a joint conference with them on the question of dearness allowance on 10th December, 1942. The representatives could not present a united front on this question at this conference. Subsequently they met together in Tarapad Hall of the Postal Club building, Calcutta on the evening of 12th December 1942, and drew up on mutual agreement a new scheme of dearness allowance which is published elsewhere in this issue. "

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta : What did they ask in that scheme ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: They saw the Director General again. The representatives met the Director General again in conference on 18th December, 1942 and submitted their scheme to him.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta : What did they demand ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : It is a very long thing. I am sorry I have not got the time to read the whole of it. If my Honourable friend wants, I can pass it on to him for his perusal. The point that I am making is this, that so far as the Posts and Telegraph Department workers are concerned, it cannot be said that there was no consultation between the Government and the workers concerned before the announcement was made.

Then, Sir, there remain what are called the clerical employees of the Central Government. So far as this body of workers is concerned, there is no Union and as there is no Union, there is also no Federation of the employees. What exists is a certain Association. First of all we have the Imperial Secretariat Association, secondly, we have the Daftary and Record Sorters Association and thirdly, there is the General Headquarters Association and the House will be glad to see that far from omitting to consult them, they sent their representatives to the Central Government and they were granted interview by the Honourable the Home Member and the Finance Member before this announcement was made. I think I am justified in saying what I said at the beginning that the allegations made by Mr. Jamnadas Mehta on which his motion was founded were really not correct. The Government have all along maintained the position they have always taken, namely, they consult the workers as far as possible.

**The Indian Finance Bill**

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar** (Labour Member) : Sir, I rise to reply to the criticism made by Honourable Members during the course of this debate on certain points or acts of commission and omission with which the Labour Department is concerned. Sir, I will begin with the points raised by Sir Frederick James. As the House is aware so far as the Labour Department is concerned these were two points to which he devoted special attention. The first one is the point which relates to paper. Sir Frederick James paid great attention to the point how Government of India was extravagant in the use of paper and how in every direction Government was responsible for what he called waste. Sir, this question of paper, as the House will recall, was once debated in the course of this Session on an adjournment motion when I gave a reply on behalf of Government. It is quite clear that my Honourable friend Sir Frederick James was not satisfied with the reply that Government then gave and has returned to the subject again. I make no complaint of his returning to the subject again for I am glad that it does give me another opportunity to explain what Government is doing in the matter of conservation of paper. Sir, before I enter into the subject matter it might be desirable to tell the House that as far as I have any information it seems to me that the House is exhibiting, if I may say so, a certain degree of over-anxiety that there is a shortage of paper, but I am not quite convinced that there is what we might call acute suffering in the matter. It might be interesting to the House, if I present to Honourable Members a few figures with regard to the publications that have been issued in Great Britain and in India. Sir, in 1939 in Great Britain, fifteen thousand books were issued and in 1940 eleven thousand were issued, in 1941 the figure was fourteen thousand. I am not saying that shortage of paper is not a question with which we are not concerned. As I said, there is shortage, but what I want to emphasise is that there is not a case of what we might call acute suffering.

Sir, proceeding further, as the House will remember, Sir Frederick James depended upon two illustrations in order to substantiate his charge of extravagance against the Government of India. Last time when the subject was debated, Sir Frederick James brought out a rent bill which is issued from the Western Court to the tenants who occupy that building. His case was that the rent bill which was presented to the tenants was a document of great enormity which contained details which were probably unnecessary and at any rate which could have been cut down in the period of the war. This time he brought out an old dilapidated copy of the Calcutta Gazette and pointed out that there were published in the Gazette certain information which could have been avoided in the course of the war.

Sir F. E. James (Madras: European): May I just interrupt my Honourable

friend for one moment ? The issue I demonstrated of the Calcutta Gazette was the one which was just received from Calcutta and I think it was dated February of this year.

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:** I am obliged to my Honourable friend. Now, Sir, the point I would like to make is this. If Sir, Frederick James was a lawyer, I am sure he would not have brought forth these two cases as illustrations of the points he was making. With regard to the rent bill, Sir Frederick James evidently forgot to look up the date on which it was printed. This bill was printed in 1938 and far from condemning the Government of India for using the bill, I think the Government of India ought to be congratulated that rather than destroying the old bills, the stock of which exists in the Government of India, the Government of India had laid aside all requirements of reforming the bill and were bent upon using the old stock which it possessed in order to conserve paper.

**Sir F. E. James:** Make them into scrap.

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:** Sir, with regard to the question of the Gazette, I think a slip was committed by Sir Frederick James by reason of the fact that he was not able to appreciate the importance of the Gazette. The Gazette is not merely a matter which contains useful information, information useful to Government, but as every lawyer knows, the Gazette is the only document where in some cases proof can be given by nothing else in a court of law except by the production of the Gazette. Even the list of enemy Firms, patents etc. Government Gazette according to the Evidence Act, is the only primary evidence by which certain things can be proved. I would therefore ask Sir Frederick James whether he would not agree with me that whatever else we may do with regard to economics in Government paper, the Gazette is the last thing which we ought to touch.

Sir F. E. James : I would point out that my case was that an enquiry should be made whether it was necessary to publish in all the Provincial Gazettes, undoubtedly unimportant items which are published in the Central Government Gazette.

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar :** The reason obviously is that every Provincial Government must publish its own Provincial Gazette as prescribed by the Government of India Act. But, Sir, I do not wish to rely upon what might be called a rhetorical reply to meet the argument of my Honourable Friend. I propose to refer to the practical steps which the Government of India have taken in order to economise paper. I would first of all take up the question of the Gazette. Now, I would request my Honourable friend Sir Frederick James and also other Honourable Members of this House who are interested in this question to compare Part-II, Section I, of the Gazette of India of 29th August with that of Part-II, Section I, of 6th March, 1943. If the House and the Honourable Members would take the trouble of comparing these two issues of the Gazette, they will find that practically the matter which used to occupy 1

1/2 pages of the Gazette is now compressed in half a column, so much space has been economised. All margins have been cut out.

**Dr. P. N. Banerjea** (Calcutta Suburbs : Non-Muhammadan Urban) : What about people with defective eye sight ?

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar** : I cannot please all. Then, Sir, with regard to the point which Sir Frederick James just now raised, I might also inform him that the Government of India has circularised all Provincial Governments whether it would not be desirable and possible for them to use notifications issued in the Gazette of India by the Government of India and not to reproduce or repeat them for their own use in their own Gazette. Of course, all that we can do is to advise and to recommend.

Then, Sir, with regard to Indian Information, the House will be interested to know that we have already issued orders that its size should be reduced to half.

Coming to the question of forms, the House will be interested to know that as a matter of fact 149 forms have been suspended during the war and 190 have been altogether abolished. Secondly the size of the form has also been reduced from 1941. In the forms printed after July 1942, no superfluous space is allowed. I would say that if Honourable Members have any suggestions to make to the Government of India, I should certainly feel extremely obliged and give my best attention to them.

Then, Sir, with regard to publications, I might assure the house that nothing is published, unless it is found to be absolutely essential. In order to determine the essentiality of any publication, the Government of India have introduced three different checks on publications. There is first of all the check applied by the Controller of Printing and Stationery. He is no longer the mechanical man who used to execute orders placed before him for printing. We have now invested him with authority to scrutinise and to examine the essentiality of any publication put before him. If he disagrees and objects, the matter is then referred to the Secretary of the Labour Department who considers the question and if the Labour Department and the Controller of Printing agree that the publication is not an essential publication, then the matter is referred to a Committee whose decision is regarded as final. Then, Sir, we have also issued instructions to printers whereby they are directed that they must make the most economical use of paper both in the matter of spacing, margin and other things. I am sure that although this may not be a very impressive list of steps taken by the Government of India, it is undoubtedly a serious attempt to produce economy. Sir, as the saying goes, no one expects Hannibal's elephant to learn the goose steps. The Government of India, and any Government for the matter of that, is a huge beast, slow in moving, slow in gaits and yet it cannot be expected to learn goose steps and yet, I think the House will agree, the Government of India has learned the goose steps, if it has not learnt, it is ready to learn.

Sir F. E. James: It is still quite young.

The Honourable **Dr. B. R. Ambedkar** : Now, Sir, I come to the definite suggestion made by my Honourable friend Sir Frederick James in the matter of bringing about economy of paper in the Government of India. His specific suggestion, if I understood him correctly, was that a body was appointed in England, a committee consisting of a Chartered Accountant, a representative of the Publishing House and a representative of the Printing establishment. Sir, he has given us no details as to the mode and the manner by which this Committee works in England, nor has he referred to any principles adopted by this Committee in order to bring about economy. It is therefore at this stage quite impossible for me to say that I am ready to accept the suggestion that he has made. But I would like to point out to him the steps that we had taken which I am sure he will agree is more or less along the lines that he suggests. The step that we have taken is to appoint an officer called Commercial Master Printer to advise the Controller of Printing. We have very recently secured the sanction of the Finance Department and the Officer will be appointed before long. I am sure this Officer will be able to do what the Committee in England is said to have done.

**Dr. P. N. Banerjea** : Is he an Indian or a European ?

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar**: We have only got the financial sanction just now.

**Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta** (Bombay Central Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural) : Will he save more than he will cost ?

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar** : Let us hope so. There is no harm in guessing and hoping. That is all that I have to say with regard to this question of paper.

The next point dealt with by Sir Frederick James was with regard to the housing of families of officers in Simla. He will appreciate that so far as housing is concerned, this is probably the lightest comer in which the Government of India finds itself. The accommodation which it had and the accommodation which it has been able to control as a result of the requisition order is nothing as compared to the officers which the Government of India has had to employ as a result of war efforts. He will also agree that if we are to prosecute the war effort fully, we have to have priority fixed for accommodation, and he will agree that so far as the priority is concerned families must take a second place as compared to the officers themselves. At the same time, the Government of India is aware how separation of husband and wife, father and children is likely to affect the mentality, the ease of mind of an officer who is required to do war effort. In order to relieve whatever distress such an arrangement might be causing, the Government of India has undertaken to open three boarding houses in Simla in order to accommodate the wives of officers who cannot leave their stations and I hope that Sir Frederick James will accept this as a token of goodwill of the Government of



India towards this very acute problem.

Then, Sir, I come to the third point which was raised by my Honourable friend, Sir Jamnadas Mehta.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta : I beg your pardon.

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : I hope you will be on the way to Knighthood. I won't withdraw, nor apologize; I only say that it is in anticipation.

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan (East Central Pubjab : Muhammadan) : Coming events cast their shadows before.

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar** : Mr. Jamnadas Mehta in the course of the debate referred to the Session of the Dominion Labour Trade Union Congress which is being held in England or which is about to be held, and he complained that Indian Labour was not represented at that Dominion Conference. Sir, I share the regret and the sorrow which Mr. Jamnadas Mehta feels at the omission of representation of Indian labour at this important labour conference, but I would like to tell Mr. Jamnadas Mehta that the Labour Department is in no sense responsible for this unfortunate result. I would also like to tell him that the Labour Department was not consulted by the conveners of this Conference and I am sure that Mr. Jamnadas Mehta will admit that we really could not do anything in this matter since we were not consulted. Why they omitted to consult us and why they did not directly consult the heads of the labour movement in this country, who are quite well known to the gentlemen who are working for this Conference, I can more than understand. But, I think, Mr. Mehta will agree that the Labour Department is as watchful as any department can be in the matter of safeguarding the interest and the position of the Labour Department. Sir, I have done.

[Part II](#)